

2. THE USEFULNESS OF BATS

Dr. Adam Krzanowski, a chiropterologist of Poland, has sent us a note on bats as an important secondary aid in locust control. He mentions in this context the common Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) of southern and western U.S.A. which, it seems, is in some ways specially adapted for the destruction of locusts. It takes its prey mostly off the ground, rarely also in the air. Its food consists chiefly of orthoptera, grasshoppers, locusts, etc., besides which it preys on moths, beetles, and even small scorpions. Its food is easy to study qualitatively since, like our Indian *Megaderma lyra*, its habit is to devour its prey hanging in a favourite spot under which accumulate dropped wings and other uneatable portions of the quarry enabling the different items to be identified. Dr. Krzanowski suggests that there are possibly some other Indian species also whose economic status as destroyers of locusts and other insect pests might be profitably investigated by a properly organized study, including their population densities and local and seasonal movements.

With reference to two notes recently published in the *Journal* [Vol. 50 (2): 401-3] on the destruction of Flying Foxes, Dr. Krzanowski suggests it might be worth while to investigate the possibilities of utilizing the skins and fur of these animals in the manufacture of fancy articles for export to foreign countries where, with proper publicity and advertising, they could easily create a fashionable and lucrative demand. Both needs could thus be satisfied, the eradication of excessive numbers of these destructive fruit bats and the earning of much-needed foreign exchange.

Scientific research on the life-history and economic status of Indian birds and other animals is a need which the Bombay Natural History Society has constantly and repeatedly stressed. In a country like ours, which is so largely dependent on its agriculture and forests, this research calls for the highest priority.

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3. PORCUPINES AND TREES OF *VERNONIA* SP.

A day or two ago I passed a very large digging round the roots of a species of *Vernonia*, a tree growing at an elevation of 5,000 to 6,000 feet on the Billigirirangans, known locally as Khan Karragillu. My comment that it was the work of a bear was contradicted by my